

ULUSLARARASI PİRİ REİS VE TÜRK DENİZCİLİK TARİHİ SEMPOZYUMU

26 - 29 EYLÜL 2013 / İSTANBUL



TÜRK DENİZCİLİK TARİHİ BİLDİRİLER



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The Ottoman Fleet and The Greek Revolution in The Correspondence of The British Consuls in Morea (1821-1827)

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A strong interest in the events related to the Greek war of Independence, one of the most intriguing parts of the Mediterranean history, was one of the reasons for writing up this paper, also in consideration of the lack of recent Italian studies on this subject which could provide for a different perspective, wider than past interpretations. In addition, it is to be hoped that starting from the historical source of this work – which is only the first part of a greater project about Ionian Islands – it will be possible to call attention to the point of view of one of the three Powers directly involved in the conflict, that is England.

The historical context does not confine to the relations and the war between Greece and Turkey, but it also includes the debate that European public opinion brought forward between the eighteen-twenties and thirties and which became a “forma di una inedita, gigantesca appropriazione collettiva della classicità ellenica” in the shape of a new, massive, collective appropriation of classical Hellenism as Mascilli Migliorini wrote¹.

Greek independence from Turkey echoed all over the Mediterranean basin and, in the light of what has been said, the study of the fifty letters written by Philips James Green, an English consul in Morea and Zante between 1821 and 1827, is quite relevant because he was an important witness of the conflicts leading to the battle of

Navarino. In this regard, the most interesting and peculiar aspect of the Sketches of the war in Greece is Green's perspective about the information he got "either from personal observation, or from the official correspondence of Consular Agents in different parts of the Morea"². After claiming that "falsehoods the most glaring have been unblushingly published to the world, and the world has had little opportunity, and less inclination to investigate the truth of the relation"³, the British consul tried to demolish the many stereotypes conveyed over the Ottomans, reversing the perspective and highlighting the horrors made by the Greeks: the houses violated, the mosques burnt or destroyed, the slave trade of women and children, and the slaughters of Turkish prisoners.

"That there are occasions where Truth is unpopular, has never been more strongly exemplified than in the progress of the present Greek Revolution. Those statements only which favoured the cause of Greek Independence, have met with ready belief. The English Papers have but echoed the tones of Foreign Journals in publishing accounts of Greek of Greek heroism and Greek triumphs, for which we should in vain seek a foundation in fact"⁴.

This is the opening of the preface to the excerpts from Green's private correspondence published in 1827 to give "a correct idea, general and coherent" of the main events related to the conflict which involved Eastern Europe in the shape of a "singular war", in answer to the "not so trustful" surveys which were published by contemporary foreign newspapers. The first letter of the memoir was written in Patras on January 3rd 1821, and the last one in London on October 18th 1827; appendix contains official records including the "Character of the modern Greeks", the "Ionian Proclamations", the "First Greek Bulletin", the "Statistical account of the Peloponnesus in 1823", the "Confession of a renegade Maltese pirate", and the "Treaty for the settlement of Greece". Green gave very detailed reports of all the events of the Revolution and interesting information about the Ottoman and Greek fleets, which met, clashed and controlled one another in the troubled waters of the Levantine side of Mediterranean sea. He described the most important stages of the conflicts by land and sea between the Greeks and the Turks, starting from the State of

affairs at Joannina, with Ali Pasha, and the first uprisings of the Greek revolution in 1821, up to the siege of Missolonghi in April 1826. Thanks to his brother Richard, who was a vice consul living in Zante and used to send him "*regular communications respecting the operations of the belligerents*"⁵, Green could send in turn dispatches from Patras and Zante to London: they are very useful documents reporting the conditions of the Ottoman Navy in the years before the battle of Navarino, occurred on October 20th 1827. Concerning this matter, William Eton, who wrote about many aspects of the Ottoman Empire, such as government, finance, military and navy forces, trade and religion, in his very interesting work *Survey of the Turkish empire* (1798), said that "*it is a difficult thing, at all times, to discover truth, amidst the misrepresentations of courts, of ministers, of commanders*"⁶. Actually, Eton thought that the descriptions of the events related to the Porte and read in the accounts published by the various courts involved, have often been reported in quite different versions; as a consequence, they have provided untruthful information, so creating some stereotypes which lasted long and were difficult to eradicate.

After all, as Candiani and Lo Basso wrote, the naval history of the Mediterranean sea between the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th centuries is generally considered as an inexorable decline stage of the whole area after the brilliant performance of the 16th century⁷. Panzac stated that, whereas on the Levantine side the Ottoman naval force worked very hard to make the Sultan's fleet one of the strongest defence mechanism for the Ottoman Empire in the following century, the arrival of the Russian fleet in the Aegean sea, in the eighteen-seventies, threw this situation out of balance⁸. Therefore, after eighteenth-century reforms and in spite of all efforts to improve shipbuilding and modernize the fleet, as Alperen Aydin clearly shows⁹, the 19th century witnessed the progressive break-up of the naval force of the Porte, notwithstanding the attempts to keep in step with the other navies of the time and the American help in shipbuilding after 1830¹⁰. However, at the end of the 18th century, Eton stated in his work that, given its importance, Turkish naval force "*will merit a separate attention; and here we shall notice those attempts at its amelioration, from which, if effectual improvement could*

*be at all hoped in Turkey, it might have been, with some probability, expected*¹¹. If, in 1798, the English superintendent wrote that, "*the naval force of the Turks is by no means considerable, because 'their grand fleet consisted of not more than 17 or 18 sail of the line in the last war, and those not in very good condition; at the present their number is lessened*"¹², twenty years later, Green's letters both strengthened and denied this opinion. On the one hand, the information given by the British consul disappointed Eton's expectations of future improvements of the fleet, on the other hand, it supported the theory of Turkish naval and military dominance (at least if compared to the Greeks) in spite of all Ottoman political problems related to the Oriental Question. In James Green's opinion, supported by documentary evidence, Greece, which was under difficult political circumstances, could never have become independent without the help of foreign Powers. Greens' accounts of the Greeks and the Turks chasing and fighting each other by land and sea, in addition to the great amount of information about the equipment of the two enemy fleets, their passages and strategies, as well as their weak and strong points, appeared to be (and they still do) the only chance for us to have a picture, from the British point of view, of the conditions of the Ottoman Navy in the period at issue, which is still lacking in European historiographical papers. Actually, a lot of sources are available from English travellers who left for Greece or the Levantine for many reasons during the revolution, but they are mostly journals or *memoirs* describing places, usages and customs, people, trade and much more. On the contrary, Greens' writings, as official papers by plenipotentiary consuls for the British government¹³, did not share the same perspective as a traveller's. These reports had been justified by different reasons, therefore their content was much more reliable. Not with standing their divergent political positions, Greens' opinions about the Ottoman Navy in the eighteen-twenties were quite similar to those expressed by the Americans, impartial observers who had eye-witnessed the events occurred in Levantine sea before and after the battle of Navarino, as my previous studies clearly show¹⁴.

In describing the various naval forces in a memo dated October 9th, 1821 the vice-consul Green argued that the Turks could bring a hundred sail of armed vessels into action, thug they had never produced more than fifty at once. The Tunisians, Tripolitans and Alegerines had occasionally furnished about twenty vessels of war, consisting of corvettes, brigs, and schooners, welt armed and manned, but these, though acting under the Turkish Admiral, "*in reality do just as they please*"¹⁵. The Turkish naval force proper, or that which was furnished from the arsenal at Constantinople, according to Green, consisted of five or six three deckers, six or eight seventy-four and fifty schooners and brigs. The Viceroy of Egypt, for some years past, had been gradually increasing his naval force and his fleet now consisted of at least sixty vessels of war. Of these, six or seven frigates, which have been chiefly built in private dock-yards at Marseilles, Leghorn and Trieste; the others consisted of corvettes, brigs and schooners and, with few exception, the whole of these vessels were of a very superior class and in excellent order. In action, and in the management of their vessels, as added the vice-consul, the Egyptians had proved themselves infinitely superior to the Constantinople Turks. But this, no doubt, was owing in a great measure to the fact of there being many foreign seamen in the Viceroy's service, who formed part of the crew of each vessel. Such was the Turkish naval power described in 1821 by Richard Green, who soon after gave a description of the Greek Navy, noting that twenty five years before the populous towns of Hydra and Spezzia were two small fishing villages. About that time the coasts of Spain and France were blockade by British vessels, so the Hydriots speculated sending in small craft with corn to the blockaded station and the immense profits they realized soon induced them to extend their risks. Their Admiral, Tombazi, informed Green that he was the first to get an American ship as a model and from this, his countrymen constructed those vessels which had subsequently been converted into armed ones. In a few years, almost the whole of the corn trade of the Black Sea was in the hands of the Greeks and the inhabitants of Hydra and Spezzia became enormously rich. At the breaking out of the revolution, this profitable tread ceased and their vessels returned to their respective islands without delay. "*With the exception of four or five three-masted polaccas and six or eight schooners*", continued Green,

“the whole of the vessels belonging to Hydra, Spezzia, and Psara, are rigged as polacca brigs, their size varying from a hundred and fifty to five hundred tons, being pierced for twelve to twenty guns. I am unable to state the exact number of vessels belonging to these three islands at the period above alluded to, but only forty or fifty were armed and equipped during the first months of the revolution: and at no one period does it appear that the Greek naval force sent to sea, ever exceeded eighty vessels”¹⁶ .

The Greek vessels, with few exceptions, had been built from beautiful models and sailed remarkably fast: their crews, added the vice-consul, had all the capabilities of good seamen, except that essential one discipline. There were several Capitani on board and each man had as much voice in the direction of the vessel as the Captain himself. This, therefore, gave rise to great confusion, but in the management of their vessels, they were “*infinitely superior to the Turks*” . The latter, as argued by Green, they had no regular marine, but whenever the ships had to be manned for any expedition, an ‘*impressment*’ took place. The press-gang used to run into coffee and wine-houses, where the ‘*poorer orders*’ resorted to drink, and seized them all indiscriminately, without making the least inquiry as to their knowledge of naval tactics. Nay, people quietly walking the streets did not escape. A more efficient race of sailors, however, was found among the traders of the Black Sea, and the boatmen of the Bosphorus, and these were impressed without mercy. Richard Green underlined that before the revolution broke out, the islands of Hydra and Spezzia were obliged to furnish a certain number of seamen whenever they should be called upon by the Porte to do so, and this was a condition of their being allowed to govern themselves. This accounted for so many Greeks being found in the Turkish Navy at the beginning of the war. Europeans also were never wanting, but it must be stated in justice to these, that many had been regularly trepanned into their service. The description of the Europeans being ‘*trepanded*’ is quite peculiar and noteworthy:

“There are a set of wine-houses at Constantinople, which are kept by Maltese and other Europeans, to which almost all the Frank sa-

ilors resort. The landlord goes to the Turkish Capoudan, and asks if he requires any Europeans, and if so, how many. The Capoudan states the number he wants, and generally pays down the money for them. The landlord then returns to the inn, finds out all the discontented sailors in the Porte, plies them well with liquor, and contrives to make them sign a regular agreement of service. As soon as this is effected, they are immediately conveyed on board ship, drunk as they are, and most especial care is taken that no opportunity of landing shall be afforded them, as long as the vessel remains in harbour"¹⁸.

Richard Green confirmed the existence of this kind of impressment in the Ottoman Navy, reporting that he had often been called '*upon officially*' to liberate Englishmen who had been first kidnapped and then cheated and that in some instances he had been successful, though in others the terms of agreement signed with the man's own hand had been shown him to prove that he was not forced into the Turkish service"¹⁹. In addition, he marked that the Europeans who were already on the ships could be easily blackmailed; actually, if they needed anything, they were allowed to get it from the coffee-houses on Turkish ships, where they could also satisfy their wishes. Since they had the same rations as the Turkish sailors, but wine, spirits, or grog were considered as extras, they had to be paid anyhow: so they usually applied to the keeper of the coffee-house, who, according to Green, was perhaps the very '*scoundrel*' who assisted in kidnapping the Europeans. If the Europeans needed anything he was allowed to get it from the coffee-house on credit and about two hundred per cent on the value of the article was charged. The sailor, therefore, after he had served several months, far from having any pay to receive, was told that the whole was due to the coffee-house keeper and that moreover he had a further debt to liquidate, which of course could only be done by further service"²⁰. As for the officers of the fleet, the question was completely different: they were usually picked out among the soldiery, and their nomination was a matter of interest resting in the hands of the Capoudan Pasha.

The study of several European sources belonging to the period at issue, like "L'Indicatore Lombardo" of 1831, for example, has un-

doubtedly shown that public opinion, which had been influenced by the newspapers of the time, thought that, starting from the Greek revolution up to 1827, the Ottoman naval force had undergone only a succession of dreadful events, including its vessels set on fire by Greek fire-ships and many other ships sunk or caught by the enemy²¹. As a matter of fact, not only did such versions of history let Europe believe that, during the Greek revolution, the Turks were the weakest point, but these interpretations also confirm how little was really known about that world which was so geographically near and famous for its success, and yet so different from western customs and traditions that it kept Europe from knowing Turkish power thoroughly. Two years before, in 1829, Margaroli wrote in his book that the Ottoman empire aroused curiosity in politicians, as well as in all nations, but they knew very little about Turkish institutions, laws, domestic economy, geographical distribution and other information needed to understand that country whose history had not always been studied accurately²². In a sense, the Ottoman empire was still to be explored, and although it had been defeated by England, France and Russia, the dispatches of the two English high-ranking functionaries show that it had kept being a Great Power even during the Greek revolution. Historical sources clearly demonstrated on several occasions, and with detailed descriptions of the events, that the *'tigre affamata'* (hungry tiger), as the Americans in the Levantine sea called the Ottoman empire at the time, could still attack, even if it was weaker. When the revolution broke out, although "*the Turks were not a whit more skilled than their enemies*"²³, a shocking sight met the English consul's eyes when he arrived at Patras in April 1821. There were eight thousand Greek people, including men, women, children and the elders, taking to the mountains or running away to the sea, ready to sail to Zante; some of them were taking refuge in consulates, above all the French ones²⁴. Russian, Prussian and Swedish consuls, "*all Greeks by birth, were the first to quit Patras, on the entry of the Turks, because they had taken an open and active part with the Greek leaders and prudently resolved not to expose themselves to the vengeance of the Turks*"²⁵. After remarking that, unless the Greek were really supported by Russia, their success was extremely doubtful because they lacked in any union or discipline²⁶, the consul seemed to be

quite worried when describing the first naval action that had been taking place, since the breaking out of the revolution, between a Turkish and a Greek vessel, off the harbour of Zante in May 1821:

“the latter was a Hydriote brig, under Russian colours, with a cargo of merchandise from Trieste; the former was likewise a brig, and part of the squadron of the Capitana Bey, half her crew consisting off Zante, when the Greek, perceiving her, weighed anchor, stood out to sea, and opened a fire, which she immediately returned, and a running fight took place, which lasted some hours, when the two vessels separated; the Turk with some loss on spars, sail, &c.”²⁷.

In the *Sketches* there is abundance of detailed descriptions of the battles at sea which took place during the revolutionary period, therefore the following charts 1 and 2, with the information about the fleets and their equipment, will be provided in order to have a clearer account of the many places and data given by the Green brothers.

Chart 1 Battles at sea

Date and site of the battle	Turkish fleet	Greek fleet
May 1821-Harbour of Zante	1 brig and part of the squadron of the Capitana Bey	1 Hydriote brig
October 12 th , 1821-Zante	1 Algerine brig (16 guns-75 men)	18 vessels (22, 14, 15, 18 guns)
November 20 th , 1822-between Prevesa and Patras	1 brig of war (16 guns, 96 men)	6 vessels (16-20 guns for each; 50-60 men for each)
December 10 th , 1823-between Ithaca and Missolongi	1 brig of war	14 vessels
November 25 th 1825	28 sails (3 frigates and many corvettes)	35 sails

Fonte: Philips James Green, *Sketches of the war in Greece*, T. Hurst and co., London 1827.

Chart 2 Sightings

Site	date	Turkish fleet	Greek fleet
Gulf of Lepanto	May 4 th , 1821	1 corvette, 1 brig, 1 galley	-
Missolongi vessels	June 2 th , 1821	5 men of war	18
Lepanto ships, brigs	June 24 th , 1821	-	23
Lepanto	June 30 th , 1821	5 vessels	-
Galaxidi brig (22 guns)	July 1 th , 1821	-	1
Patrass	Sept. 20 th , 1821	60 vessels (36 Turkish, 14 Egyptian, 10 Algerine)	-
Galaxidi	Oct. 2 th , 1821	90 vessels (15-20 armed)	-
Zante	Feb. 14 th , 1822	32 vessels of war, 36 transports (4.000 Asiatic troops on board)	-
Bay of Patrass	May 1822	6 armed vessels	-
Zante vessels	June 27 th , 1822	-	52
Zante	June 28 th , 1822	32 vessels of war	-
Missolongi vessels	July 1822	-	5
Patrass	August 8 th , 1822	80 vessels of war	-
Zante vessels,	Nov. 19 th , 1822	-	6
			1 fine-ship
Gulf of Patrass	March 5 th , 1823	1 corvette, several small craft (1000 men on board)	
Gulf of Patrass cruisers	March 24 th , 1823	-	11

Zante	June 18 th , 1823	46 sails	-
-	July 15 th , 1823	60 ships of war, a few transports - (combined force)	-
Patrass	August 23 th , 1823	70 vessels	-
Missolongi vessels	Dec. 14 th , 1823	12 sails, 3 frigates	14
Gulf of Lepanto vessels	Dec. 30 th , 1824	-	8
Navarino	July 4 th , 1825	53 vessels, 2 transports	-
Patrass	July 20 th , 1825	50-60 boats (2000 Turks)	-
Missolongi vessels,	July 30 th , 1825	-	19
fire-ship			3
Missolongi	August 1825	55 vessels	-
Zante 35-40 sails	August 2 th , 1825	-	-
Navarino	Nov. 13 th , 1825	130 vessels (combined fleet: 79 hoist pendants, 10 fire-ships, 1 steam vessels*)	-
Zante	Nov. 17 th , 1825	60 vessels	-
Missolongi	May 1826	combined fleet + 60 launches and Flat-bottomed boats, 3 floating batteries	-

Fonte: Philips James Green, *Sketches of the war in Greece*, T. Hurst and co., London 1827.

*The steam vessel has been purchased by the Viceroy of Egypt and was formerly the London Engineer Margate Packet (Ivi, p. 227).

There was another topic which had been laid a stress upon in the Sketches: it dealt with a comparison between both Turkish and Greek nautical skills. According to the vice consul:

“Nautical skill may truly be said not to exist among the Turks, and any one who has had the good fortune to have sailed with the squadron which accompanied our fleet at the time of Bonaparte’s expedition to Egypt, is thought a very Nelson. With such a crew it is matter of surprise how the Turks manage to navigate at all; but the fact is, that the vessel is sailed and steered by Europeans, while the fighting part belongs exclusively to the Turks”²⁸.

On the basis of his own observations, as well as on rumour, the English functionary could verify that the confusion on a Turkish vessel was ‘*absolutely ridiculous*’. One half of the men were horribly sea-sick, sprawling about the deck, while the other half were pulling at ropes, of which they had no knowledge. The Chaouses were seen running here and there, bastinadoing right and left, and forcing the men to their duty. Indeed, the way in which the sailors were taught to handle and knew the different ropes was, as Green was informed, quite on a par with the rest of the system. At the best time, there was a little discipline, but in certain situations there was none. It was the knowledge of this, in the opinion of the vice-consul, that emboldened the small Greek vessels to approach and manoeuvre round the heavy armed Turkish frigates with perfect impunity:

“a Greek vessels once approached a Turkish heavy frigate so close, that the anchor of the latter caught hold of some part of the rigging of the former. In a instant both one and the other ran to cut away and disentangle themselves; the Greek not liking such close quarters, and the Turk taking his enemy to be a fire-ship. Not a single shot was fired. The loquacious Greek was heard to vociferate the vilest abuse on the Turk and on Mahomet; while the grave Turk, on the other side, merely shook his finger, and invited him to fight it out hand to hand. A single broadside from an European, of half the weight of metal of the Turk, would have blown the Greek out of the water”²⁹.

However, Green added that these scenes occurred at the beginning of the revolution. Both their panic and their thorough want of

skill have been bettered by experience, and in more than one instance a single Turkish vessel fought its way through a whole Greek squadron. Again, this statement supported the idea of the superiority of the Turkish fleet in comparison to the Greek one; in addition, the vice consul, by reason of his own experience, claimed that in Europe there was an erroneous opinion respecting the Greek marine. The Greeks, as noted by Richard Green, were far from being experienced sailors, with the exception of the Hydriots and Spezziots, but even if few of the Captains of those two islands had studied navigation, and to a very limited extent, their ignorance in this respect was obviated by the circumstance of their rarely navigating out of sight of land. During fine weather they managed their vessels and small coasting craft very well, and even expertly, but in a squall or gale of wind, especially during the night, they generally lost all self-possession, the greatest confusion prevailed, incense was burnt, the Virgin invoked and every endeavour made to run the vessel into the nearest port for shelter³⁰. The Greeks of the revolution - which, according to Richard Green, when they spoke of Liberty they exalted themselves in a manner to make you believe that they were ready to undertake every thing, even to sacrifice every thing, to obtain it, but in reality, this indignation, which they manifested against their oppressor, proceeded less from their love for freedom, than from a desire to see their religion dominate³¹ - were those who had rejected the pardon offered by the Turks at the beginning of the conflict. Consul Green severely criticized Greek behaviour during the revolution, because they had not respected the principle of neutrality concerning the Ionian Islands and established by England, whose protectorate dated back to 1814. In order to prove the position adopted by the Ionian Government, the 'Proclamation' signed in Corfu by the Secretary to the Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands, Thomas Maitland, on October 9th 1821, was enclosed by the consul in the Appendix to his Correspondence³². The document stated "*the principle of perfect and invariable neutrality of the Executive Government of those States*" and provided for severe penalties to the countries which did not observe the rules.

The Greeks had also imposed a blockade with a declaration signed by the President of the Executive, Alexandros Mavrocordatos, on March 13th 1822, where it was stated that "*in a state of blockade all the*

ports still occupied by the enemy, as well in Epirus as in the Peloponnesus, Eubœa, and Thessaly, from Epidamnus as far as Thessalonica; as likewise the ports of the Egean Sea, the Islands Sporades and Crete, which are still in the power of the enemy" ³³. It was an act which forced the Government of Great Britain, that "has never by any formal act recognized the independence of the Greek nation", to claim "that it will observe neutrality between the Turks and the Greeks" ³⁴ and take severe measures against the latter to protect English ships ³⁵. To consul James Green, the Greeks were also those who had had an "inhuman and treacherous conduct" in many situations, from the slaughtering of hundreds of Turks ³⁶ to the shamelessly human trafficking of women and children, who were subjugated after being taken prisoner ³⁷. Soon after the siege of Missolonghi by the Egyptian army, in April 1826, the vice consul Richard Green returned to England, the British Government having decided on the inutility of keeping up the Consular establishment in Morea. James Green, on the contrary, kept on receiving regular communications respecting the operations of the belligerents, having another younger brother residing in Zante. His last letter was written from London on October 18th 1827, that is two days before the battle of Navarino between the allied Powers and the Egyptian fleet of Ibrahim Pasha, which had been sent to help the Ottoman Navy. In this letter, the consul summed up the period stretching from the outbreak of the Greek revolution to that year, making a peculiar report of the conditions of the Ottoman naval forces only two days from the defeat, observing that

"The Turkish and Egyptian fleets have retained their superiority at sea undisputed, and it would appear that the means thus afforded of supplying their troops in the Morea, has been considered a sufficient advantage; these powerful naval armaments not having even attempted to strike a single blow. On the other hand, the Greeks, finding by experience, that they could not cope with so formidable an enemy, have wisely returned to their islands, and, with few exceptions, dismantled their vessels" ³⁸.

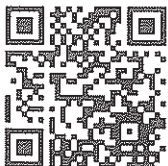
According to the consul, in June 1827, the whole of Continental Greece, with the exception of the district of Maina, was in the power of the Ottomans and the resources of the Grand Seignior and

of the Viceroy of Egypt had prevented Greece from receiving fresh armaments. In his view, it could not therefore be reasonably doubted that the Insurgent force remaining in arms would have been soon compelled to submit and make the best terms they could with the Porte. For it would have been preposterous to suppose that Lord Cochrane, an Admiral of the Greek fleet, with a single vessel and without funds, could have fought against the combined Ottoman forces. Following the treaty signed in London on July 6th by which England, France and Russia bound themselves to undertake the pacification of Greece, and after it was presented to the Porte, and a fleet belonging to the three Powers appeared in the Archipelago, the Divan became alarmed and the Sultan expressed his willingness to treat with the Allies on the Subject of Greece, as the consul reported. The Green brothers' account did not give any information about subsequent events; however, owing to the available material, not only does it show that the Turkish naval forces were not inferior to those belonging to the other countries, as it was believed in Europe, but also that its weakness was a consequence of the alliance of the three Great Powers which later would have influenced Ottoman domestic affairs by planning the creation of an independent Greek state. The election of Prince Otto of Bavaria as king of the newly born Greece in 1832 - which had been imposed by the Great Powers - showed that the most significant component in the Greek War of Independence was undoubtedly the direct political interference of the same Powers with Ottoman national affairs³⁹. As Goodwin wrote, the Ottoman empire was considered, by its own population, a kind of miracle of dynamism, energy and organization, wonderful even in its decline, and able to disprove the constant forecasts about its imminent breakdown, outliving its greatest enemies, anyway⁴⁰.

Muhittin Pîrî Reis, Türk Dünyasının yetiştirdiği en büyük haritacı, coğrafyacı, kartograf ve denizci olarak, dünya denizcilik tarihinde müstesna bir yere sahiptir. Gerçekten de Pîrî Reis tarafından hazırlanan “Kitab-ı Bahriyye” ile yine O'nun çizdiği iki dünya haritası, hem bilimsel ve görsel, hem de işlevsel ve teknik açıdan son derece üstün ve çağını aşan niteliklere sahiptir. Pîrî Reis tarafından 1513 yılında çizilen ilk dünya haritası, Atatürk'ün emriyle 1929 yılında Topkapı Sarayı'nda başlatılan envanter tespit, değerlendirme ve Topkapı Sarayı'nı kadim eserler müzesi haline getirme çalışmaları esnasında tesadüfen iki Alman bilim adamı Prof. Dr. Gustav Adolf Deismann ve Prof. Dr. Paul Kahle tarafından keşfedildiğinde, büyük bir ilgi çekeceğini hiç kimse tahmin edemezdi. Çünkü bu haritacılık şaheseri çizimin içeriği, tekniği ve görselliği ile dünya çapında yankı uyandırmış ve bu ilgi bilim kurgu yazılarına ilham oluşturacak kadar ileri gitmiştir.

2013 Yılı, bu haritanın çizilmesinin 500. yıl dönümüdür ve bu önemli olay; 25 Ekim-10 Kasım 2011 tarihleri arasında Fransa'nın Başkenti Paris'te gerçekleştirilen UNESCO'nun 36. Genel Konferansında 2013'ün Dünya Pîrî Reis Yılı kabul edilerek kutlama ve anma programına alınmıştır. Beş yüz yıl sonra Türk Dünyasının yetiştirdiği bu büyük kartografi, denizciyi, bilim adamını anmak ve onun Türk ve Dünya Haritacılık, Coğrafyacılık ve Denizcilik Tarihi'ne katkısını ortaya koyarak, farkındalığı arttırmak, yeni ve farklı bilgilerin paylaşımını sağlamak amacıyla 26-29 Eylül tarihlerinde Türk Tarih Kurumu'nca İstanbul'da Uluslararası Muhittin Pîrî Reis ve Türk Denizcilik Tarihi Sempozyumu düzenlenmiş, 18 ülkeden katılan yaklaşık 100 bilim insanı tebliğlerini sunmuşlardır, Türk Tarih Kurumu olarak bu tebliğleri kitap haline getirmenin ve Pîrî Reis'i bu çalışmayla anmanın haklı gururunu yaşıyoruz.

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